IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1, 7, 13, 14, 16, 20, 24-26, 31 and 36 as follows:

1. (currently amended)   A method of forecasting a staffing requirement necessary to handle forecasted contacts received of a contact type, the method comprising the steps of:

propagating the forecasted contacts received in proportion to a propagation value assigned to each of a predetermined number of periods; and

forecasting the staffing requirement necessary to handle the propagated forecasted contacts received; and

wherein one or both of the steps of propagating the forecasted contacts received and forecasting the staffing requirement are performed at least in part through one or more processing devices.

2. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the propagation values are assigned to achieve at least one of a front-weighted curve, a back-weighted curve, a bell curve, flat curve, a multi-level service goal, an average speed of answer, and a custom distribution.

3. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of propagating the forecasted contacts received further comprises:

determining which periods can receive allocations for the contact type, each period being assigned a propagation value; and

allocating the forecasted contacts received to the current period by the substeps of:

summing the propagation values from each period that can receive allocations;

calculating "contacts to propagate from the past period" as the product of the forecasted contacts received for the past period and a service goal for the past period;

calculating "contacts to propagate to the current period" as the product of the "contacts to propagate from the past period" and the quotient of the propagation value of the current period divided by the sum of propagation values; and

allocating the "contacts to propagate to the current period" to the current period.

4.   (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of calculating the staffing requirement for the current period is performed with reference to "ContactsHandled," "AHTinSeconds," and "SecondsInStatPeriod."

5.   (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of calculating the staffing requirement for the current period is performed according to the equation:

$$\text{Staffing Requirement} = \left(\frac{\text{ContactsHandled x AHTinSeconds}}{\text{SecondsInStatPeriod}} \right)$$

wherein:

"ContactsHandled" is equivalent to the "contacts to propagate to the current period";

"AHTinSeconds" is the average handling time for the contact type; and

"SecondsInStatPeriod" is the length in seconds of the current period.

6.   (original) The method of Claim 5, wherein the staffing requirement is further divided by the quotient of a maximum occupancy goal percent divided by 100.

7.   (currently amended) A method of forecasting a staffing requirement necessary to handle forecasted contacts received of a contact type, the method comprising the steps of:

determining whether the contact type is an immediate contact type or a non-immediate contact type;

upon a determination that the contact type is an immediate contact type, calculating the staffing requirement in order to resolve the forecasted contacts within a predetermined amount of time; and

upon a determination that the contact type is a non-immediate contact type, calculating the staffing requirement by performing the substeps of:

propagating the forecasted contacts received in proportion to a propagation value assigned to each of a predetermined number of periods; and

calculating the staffing requirement necessary to handle the propagated forecasted contacts received; and

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<u>wherein one or more of the step of determining and the steps of calculating the staffing requirement are performed at least in part through one or more processing devices.</u>

8. (original) The method of Claim 7, wherein the propagation values are assigned to achieve at least one of a front-weighted curve, a back-weighted curve, a bell curve, flat curve, a multi-level service goal, an average speed of answer, and a custom distribution.

9. (original) The method of Claim 7, wherein the step of propagating the forecasted contacts received further comprises:

determining which periods can receive allocations for the contact type, each period being assigned a propagation value; and

allocating the forecasted contacts received to the current period by the substeps of:

summing the propagation values from each period that can receive allocations;

calculating "contacts to propagate from the past period" as the product of the forecasted contacts received for the past period and a service goal for the past period;

calculating "contacts to propagate to the current period" as the product of the "contacts to propagate from the past period" and the quotient of the propagation value of the current period divided by the sum of propagation values; and

allocating the "contacts to propagate to the current period" to the current period.

10. (original) The method of Claim 7, wherein the step of calculating the staffing requirement for the current period is performed with reference to "ContactsHandled," "AHTinSeconds," and "SecondsInStatPeriod."

11. (original) The method of Claim 7, wherein the step of calculating the staffing requirement for the current period is performed according to the equation:

$$\text{Staffing Requirement} = \left(\frac{\text{ContactsHandled x AHTinSeconds}}{\text{SecondsInStatPeriod}} \right)$$

wherein:

"ContactsHandled" is equivalent to the "contacts to propagate to the current period";

"AHTinSeconds" is the average handling time for the contact type; and

"SecondsInStatPeriod" is the length in seconds of the current period.

12.   (original) The method of Claim 11, wherein the staffing requirement is further divided by the quotient of a maximum occupancy goal percent divided by 100.

13.   (currently amended) A method for determining the total, non-immediate, multimedia contacts in a period within a range, comprising, for each contact type and for each period in the range, wherein the period is a current period and each period which precedes the current period is a past period, the step of determining whether the current period can receive allocations and, upon a determination that the current period can receive allocations, performing for each past period affecting the current period the substeps of:

calculating a "total contacts to propagate from past period" as the product of a forecasted "contacts received" from the past period and a "service percent" for the past period;

calculating a "contacts propagated to current period" as the product of the "total contacts to propagate from past period" and the quotient of a propagation value of the current period divided by the sum of propagation values for all periods affected by the past period; and

summing the "contacts propagated to current period" into the "total contacts to handle in current period" for all contact types; and

wherein one or more of the substeps of calculating the "total contacts to propagate from past period", calculating a "contacts propagated to current period", and summing are performed at least in part through one or more processing devices.

14.   (currently amended) An apparatus for forecasting a staffing requirement necessary to handle forecasted contacts received of a contact type, the apparatus comprising:

    means for propagating the forecasted contacts received in proportion to a propagation value assigned to each of a predetermined number of periods; ~~and~~

    means for forecasting the staffing requirement necessary to handle the propagated forecasted contacts received; and

    <u>wherein one or both of the means for propagating the forecasted contacts received and forecasting the staffing requirement comprise one or more processing devices.</u>

15.   (original) The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein the propagation values are assigned to achieve at least one of a front-weighted curve, a back-weighted curve, a bell curve, flat curve, a multi-level service goal, an average speed of answer, and a custom distribution.

16.   (currently amended) The ~~method~~ <u>apparatus</u> of Claim 14, wherein the means for propagating the forecasted contacts received further comprises:

    means for determining which periods can receive allocations for the contact type, each period being assigned a propagation value; and

    means for allocating the forecasted contacts received to the current period, comprising:

        means for summing the propagation values from each period that can receive allocations;

        means for calculating "contacts to propagate from the past period" as the product of the forecasted contacts received for the past period and a service goal for the past period;

        means for calculating "contacts to propagate to the current period" as the product of the "contacts to propagate from the past period" and the quotient of the propagation value of the current period divided by the sum of propagation values; and

        means for allocating the "contacts to propagate to the current period" to the current period.

17.   (original) The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein the means for calculating the staffing requirement for the current period is performed with reference to "ContactsHandled," "AHTinSeconds," and "SecondsInStatPeriod."

18.   (original) The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein the means for calculating the staffing requirement for the current period is performed according to the equation:

$$\text{Staffing Requirement} = \left(\frac{\text{ContactsHandled x AHTinSeconds}}{\text{SecondsInStatPeriod}} \right)$$

wherein:

"ContactsHandled" is equivalent to the "contacts to propagate to the current period";

"AHTinSeconds" is the average handling time for the contact type; and

"SecondsInStatPeriod" is the length in seconds of the current period.

19.   (original) The apparatus of Claim 18, wherein the staffing requirement is further divided by the quotient of a maximum occupancy goal percent divided by 100.

20.   (currently amended) An apparatus for forecasting a staffing requirement necessary to handle forecasted contacts received of a contact type, the apparatus comprising:

means for determining whether the contact type is an immediate contact type or a non-immediate contact type;

upon a determination that the contact type is an immediate contact type, means for calculating the staffing requirement in order to resolve the forecasted contacts received within a predetermined amount of time; and

upon a determination that the contact type is a non-immediate contact type, means for calculating the staffing requirement comprising:

means for propagating the forecasted contacts received in proportion to a propagation value assigned to each of a predetermined number of periods; and

means for calculating the staffing requirement necessary to handle the propagated forecasted contacts received; and

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wherein one or more of the means for determining and the means for calculating the staffing requirement comprise one or more processing devices

21.   (original) The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein the propagation values are assigned to achieve at least one of a front-weighted curve, a back-weighted curve, a bell curve, flat curve, a multi-level service goal, an average speed of answer, and a custom distribution.

22.   (original) The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein the means for propagating the forecasted contacts received further comprises:

means for determining which periods can receive allocations for the contact type, each period being assigned a propagation value; and

means for allocating the forecasted contacts received to the current period comprising:

means for summing the propagation values from each period that can receive allocations;

means for calculating "contacts to propagate from the past period" as the product of the forecasted contacts received for the past period and a service goal for the past period;

means for calculating "contacts to propagate to the current period" as the product of the "contacts to propagate from the past period" and the quotient of the propagation value of the current period divided by the sum of propagation values; and

means for allocating the "contacts to propagate to the current period" to the current period.

23.   (original) The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein the means for calculating the staffing requirement for the current period is performed according to the equation:

$$\text{Staffing Requirement} = \left(\frac{\text{ContactsHandled} \times \text{AHTinSeconds}}{\text{SecondsInStatPeriod}} \right)$$

wherein:

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"ContactsHandled" is equivalent to the "contacts to propagate to the current period";

"AHTinSeconds" is the average handling time for the contact type; and

"SecondsInStatPeriod" is the length in seconds of the current period.

24.   (currently amended) The apparatus of Claim ~~25~~ 23, wherein the staffing requirement is further divided by the quotient of a maximum occupancy goal percent divided by 100.

25.   (currently amended) An apparatus for calculating the total, non-immediate, multimedia contacts in a period within a range, comprising, for each contact type and for each period in the range, wherein the period is a current period and each period which precedes the current period is a past period, the apparatus comprising means for determining whether the current period can receive allocations and, upon a determination that the current period can receive allocations, for each past period affecting the current period:

> means for calculating a "total contacts to propagate from past period" as the product of a forecasted "contacts received" from the past period and a "service percent" for the past period;
>
> means for calculating a "contacts propagated to current period" as the product of the "total contacts to propagate from past period" and the quotient of a propagation value of the current period divided by the sum of propagation values for all periods affected by the past period; ~~and~~
>
> means for summing the "contacts propagated to current period" into the "total contacts to handle in current period" for all contact types; and
>
> wherein one or more of the means for calculating the "total contacts to propagate from past period", calculating a "contacts propagated to current period", and summing comprise one or more processing devices.

26.   (currently amended) A computer program product for forecasting a staffing requirement necessary to handle forecasted contacts received of a contact type, the computer program product having a medium with a computer program embodied thereon, the computer program comprising:

computer program code for propagating the forecasted contacts received in proportion to a propagation value assigned to each of a predetermined number of periods; and

computer program code for calculating the staffing requirement necessary to handle the propagated forecasted contacts received; and

wherein one or both of the computer program code for propagating the forecasted contacts received and calculating the staffing requirement are executed at least in part through one or more processing devices.

27.   (original) The computer program product of Claim 26, wherein the propagation values are assigned to achieve at least one of a front-weighted curve, a back-weighted curve, a bell curve, flat curve, a multi-level service goal, an average speed of answer, and a custom distribution.

28.   (original) The computer program product of Claim 26, wherein the computer program code for propagating the forecasted contacts received further comprises:

computer program code for determining which periods can receive allocations for the contact type, each period being assigned a propagation value; and

computer program code for allocating the forecasted contacts received to the current period comprising:

computer program code for summing the propagation values from each period that can receive allocations;

computer program code for calculating "contacts to propagate from the past period" as the product of the forecasted contacts received for the past period and a service goal for the past period;

computer program code for calculating "contacts to propagate to the current period" as the product of the "contacts to propagate from the past period" and the

quotient of the propagation value of the current period divided by the sum of propagation values; and

computer program code for allocating the "contacts to propagate to the current period" to the current period.

29.   (original) The computer program product of Claim 26, wherein the computer program code for calculating the staffing requirement for the current period is performed according to the equation:

$$Staffing\ Requirement = \left(\frac{ContactsHandled \times AHTinSeconds}{SecondsInStatPeriod} \right)$$

wherein:

"ContactsHandled" is equivalent to the "contacts to propagate to the current period";

"AHTinSeconds" is the average handling time for the contact type; and

"SecondsInStatPeriod" is the length in seconds of the current period.

30.   (original) The computer program product of Claim 29, wherein the staffing requirement is further divided by the quotient of a maximum occupancy goal percent divided by 100.

31.   (currently amended) A computer program product for forecasting a staffing requirement necessary to handle forecasted contacts received of a contact type, the computer program product having a medium with a computer program embodied thereon, the computer program comprising:

computer program code for determining whether the contact type is an immediate contact type or a non-immediate contact type;

upon a determination that the contact type is an immediate contact type, computer program code for calculating the staffing requirement in order to resolve the forecasted contacts received within a predetermined amount of time; and

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upon a determination that the contact type is a non-immediate contact type, computer

program code for calculating the staffing requirement comprising:

computer program code for propagating the forecasted contacts received in

proportion to a propagation value assigned to each of a predetermined number

of periods; and

computer program code for calculating the staffing requirement necessary to handle

the propagated forecasted contacts received; and

wherein one or more of the computer program code for determining and the computer

program code for calculating the staffing requirement are executed at least in part

through one or more processing devices

32.   (original) The computer program product of Claim 31, wherein the propagation

values are assigned to achieve at least one of a front-weighted curve, a back-weighted curve, a

bell curve, flat curve, a multi-level service goal, an average speed of answer, and a custom

distribution.

33.   (original) The computer program product of Claim 31, wherein the computer

program code for propagating the forecasted contacts received further comprises:

computer program code for determining which periods can receive allocations for the

contact type, each period being assigned a propagation value; and

computer program code for allocating the forecasted contacts received to the current

period comprising:

computer program code for summing the propagation values from each period that

can receive allocations;

computer program code for calculating "contacts to propagate from the past period"

as the product of the forecasted contacts received for the past period and a

service goal for the past period; and

computer program code for calculating "contacts to propagate to the current period"

as the product of the "contacts to propagate from the past period" and the

quotient of the propagation value of the current period divided by the sum of propagation values.

34.   (original) The computer program product of Claim 31, wherein the computer program code for calculating the staffing requirement for the current period is performed according to the equation:

$$\text{Staffing Requirement} = \left(\frac{\text{ContactsHandled x AHTinSeconds}}{\text{SecondsInStatPeriod}} \right)$$

wherein:

"ContactsHandled" is equivalent to the "contacts to propagate to the current period";

"AHTinSeconds" is the average handling time for the contact type; and

"SecondsInStatPeriod" is the length in seconds of the current period.

35.   (original) The computer program product of Claim 34, wherein the staffing requirement is further divided by the quotient of a maximum occupancy goal percent divided by 100.

36.   (currently amended) A computer program product for calculating the total, non-immediate, multimedia contacts in a period within a range, for each contact type and for each period in the range, wherein the period is a current period and each period which precedes the current period is a past period, the computer program product having a medium with a computer program embodied thereon, the computer program comprising:

computer program code for determining whether the current period can receive allocations and, upon a determination that the current period can receive allocations, performing for each past period affecting the current period:

computer program code for calculating a "total contacts to propagate from past period" as the product of a forecasted "contacts received" from the past period and a "service percent" for the past period;

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computer program code for calculating a "contacts propagated to current period" as the product of the "total contacts to propagate from past period" and the quotient of a propagation value of the current period divided by the sum of propagation values for all periods affected by the past period; and

computer program code for summing the "contacts propagated to current period" into the "total contacts to handle in current period" for all contact types, and wherein one or more of the computer program code of calculating the "total contacts to propagate from past period", calculating a "contacts propagated to current period", and summing are performed at least in part through one or more processing devices.